

What's at Your Tailgate?

Objective

Students read about the history of tailgating and identify the agricultural sources of some typical foods and objects associated with tailgating. Students research and write about products used in tailgating and about festivals around the state. Student write creative stories about tailgate parties. Students use their math skills to plan a class tailgate party.

Background

A tailgate party is a social event held on and around the open tailgate of a vehicle. It originated in the United States and often involves grilling food. Tailgate parties occur in the parking lots at stadiums and arenas, before and occasionally after games and concerts. People often bring their own barbecues, food, etc., which is sampled and shared among fans attending the tailgate.

John Sherry, a University of Notre Dame cultural anthropologist, conducted a two-year study of college tailgating and found that the tailgating tradition may have ties to harvest celebrations in ancient Rome and Greece and picnics during Civil War battles.

According to Sherry, the first tailgate-like celebration may have occurred near the start of the Civil War. Civilians traveled out from Washington, DC, to witness the first Battle of Bull Run in 1861. Enjoying picnic baskets full of food, they cheered on their “teams” from distant areas surrounding the battle sites. This is one of the first documentations in American history of people cheering at an event while sharing food and company.



The chuckwagon — named for the slang term for food (“chuck”) — was invented in Texas in 1866 as a way to feed travelers and traveling

Oklahoma Academic Standards

GRADE 3

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3;
W.1,2. Research: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2,3
Economics: 2,3
Number & Operation: 2.5

GRADE 4

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3;
W.1,2. Research: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2,3
Regional Environment: 3,4
Number & Operation: 1.5; Algebra:
2.2

GRADE 5

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3;
W.1,2. Research: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2,3
Number & Operation: 1.4

Materials

picnic basket, or other large basket
picnic blankets
table cloth
first aid kit
household cleaning kit
chocolate milk
football
bread
corn chips
cookies
jar of peanut butter
paper plates
plastic cups
napkins
charcoal briquettes
ketchup
potato
can of beans
hot dogs
cheese
plastic forks
disposable camera
cotton hat
sunglasses
avocado
apples
grapes
lemon
orange
grapes
carrots
tomato
ceramic bowl
chewing gum

zip closing jewelry bags with hole punched above zipper
yarn
wheat seeds

workers like cowboys. The horse-drawn wagon was part of the wagon train and carried food and a way to cook it. The chuckwagon was an early version of what many tailgaters set up on their own: a truck with a grill in the back.

Popular tailgate party foods include picnic staples, such as hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans, and cold salads like coleslaw or potato salad. Some food products were created because of tailgate parties. A brand of pimento cheese, called Palmetto Cheese, got its start at Atlanta Braves tailgate parties.

Language Arts

1. Bring a large basket to class and fill it with items that might be needed for a tailgate party. (See the list provided with this lesson.) In the course of the following discussion, pull out items as needed to trigger ideas.
 - Read and discuss background and vocabulary.
 - Students will name their favorite tailgate foods. Write the items on the board. Discuss the ingredients for each item. What is the agricultural source of each ingredient? Is it something that is produced in Oklahoma? (See answer key, included with this lesson.)
 - Students will make a list of the nonfood items needed for a tailgate. Use the contents of the basket to help students think of items (plates, napkins, etc.) Discuss the source for each of the items listed. (See answer key, included with this lesson.)
2. Provide jewelry bags and yarn for students to make “Agriculture Tailgate Necklaces.”
 - Students will add the following as you discuss their agricultural source.
 - Wheat seeds (to represent hot dog, hamburger buns)
 - Corn (popcorn, nachos, chips)
 - Soybean (ticket ink)
 - Grass confetti or crumbled paper strips (Bermuda grass developed at OSU)
 - Pig confetti (football, hot dogs)
 - Cow confetti (hamburgers, leather footballs)
 - Cotton ball (socks, uniforms)
 - Tickets (trees)
 - Football confetti
3. Students will select tailgate-related items and use online or library resources to research and write reports about the selected items. (“Ag Facts” on the OAITC website is a good source for basic information about various agricultural commodities grown in Oklahoma. Click on “Additional Resources” and then “Ag Facts.”)
 - Students will share their reports with the class.
 - Provide copies of the chart provided with this lesson.
 - Students will fill out the chart as they listen to the reports from their classmates.

Social Studies

1. Students will use online or library resources to research regional tailgate foods that reflect the diverse but unified nature of the American people and the different climates and natural resources (Examples: New England clambake, Texas barbecue, New Orleans shrimp boil). Students will develop tailgate menus from the different regions.
2. Students will use online or library resources to research festivals around Oklahoma associated with particular crops (peach festival, pecan festival, etc.) Students will work as a class to place the festivals on a map of Oklahoma. Students will each choose one of the festivals and write a history or produce a poster, PowerPoint, etc., to promote the festival.

Math

1. Students will plan a class tailgate and develop math problems to determine how much they need of each item, how much space they will need, etc., based on the number of students in the class.
— Send a letter home to parents with a list of the items needed and ask for contributions to the picnic. In the spirit of tailgating tradition, each person should contribute something.

Extra Reading

- Basel, Roberta, *From Milk to Cheese*, Capstone, 2005.
- Bial, Raymond, *The Super Soybean*, Albert, Whitman and Company, 2007.
- Gibbons, Gail, *Corn*, Holiday House, 2009.
- Gibbons, Gail, *Pigs*, Holiday House, 2003.
- Gleason, Carrie, *The Biography of Cotton (How Did That Get Here?)*, Crabtree, 2005.
- Head, Honor, *Salad (On Your Plate)*, Franklin Watts, 2007.
- Keller, Kristin Thoennes, *From Peanut to Peanut Butter*, First Facts, 2004.
- Leavell, Chuck, and Nicholas Cravotta, *The Tree Farmer*, VSP, 2005.
- Levenson, George, *Bread Comes to Life*, Tricycle, 2008.
- Marshall, Pam, *From Tree to Paper*, Lerner, 2002.
- Moore, Heidi, *The Story Behind Cotton (True Stories)*, Heinemann Library, 2009.
- Reilly, Kathleen, and Samuel Carbaugh, *Food: 25 Amazing Projects: Investigate the History and Science of What We Eat (Build It Yourself Series)*, Nomad, 2010.
- Robbins, Ken, *Food for Thought: The Stories Behind the Things We Eat*, Flash Point, 2009.
- Storey, Rita, *Wool and Cotton (How We Use Materials)*, Smart Apple, 2007.
- Worrell, Kellie, *From Our Fields to You*, Worrell, 2011.

Fun Tailgating Fact

The charcoal briquette was invented in 1920 by Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. Ford was looking for a way to use the large amounts of sawdust left from making wood panels for his cars. He got together with Edison to develop the finished product.

No doubt many tailgators served food cooked on charcoal from the tailgates of their wood-paneled station wagons.

More of the story: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/28/magazine/who-made-that-charcoal-briquette.html?_r=0

Vocabulary

anthropology— the science of human beings and especially of their physical characteristics, their origin, their environment and social relations, and their culture

barbeque— meat roasted or broiled over an open fire

cultural anthropologist— a branch of anthropology focused on the study of cultural variation among humans

grill— to broil on a grate

harvest— the season when crops are gathered

originate— to come into existence

social— of or relating to human society

tailgate— a panel at the back end of a vehicle (as a station wagon) that can be let down for loading and unloading

What's in Your Tailgate? (Answers)

Picnic item	Made From	Grown in Oklahoma?
picnic basket, or other large basket	wood	yes
picnic blankets	cotton or wool	yes
table cloth	cotton	yes
first aid kit	soybeans or other oilseeds or animal fats	yes
household cleaning kit	soybeans or other oilseeds or animals fats	yes
chocolate milk	milk	yes
football	leather from hide of pig, sheep or cow	yes
bread	wheat	yes
corn chips	corn	yes
oatmeal cookies	flour from wheat, oatmeal from oats, egg, butter or cooking oil from oilseeds, raisins from grapes	yes
jar of peanut butter	peanuts	yes
box of raisins	grapes, box from wood, ink from soy	yes
potato chips	potatoes, oil from peanuts, cotton, soy or other oilseeds	yes
can of beans	beans	yes
hot dogs	beef, pork, chicken or turkey from farm animals	yes
cheese	milk from dairy cow, sheep or goat	yes
paper plates	wood	yes
plastic cups	plastics from soy or other oilseeds	yes
napkins	wood	yes
plastic forks	plastics from soy or other oilseeds	yes
charcoal briquettes	wood shavings	yes
disposable camera	film is made from hooves and horns of farm animals	yes
ketchup	tomatoes	yes
cotton hat	cotton	yes
sunglasses	plastic from soy and other oilseeds	yes
avocado	avocado	no
apples	apple	yes
grapes	grapes	yes
lemon	lemon	no
orange	orange	no
carrots	carrot	yes
tomato	tomato	yes
hard bound book	glue from soy or hooves of farm animals, ink from soy	yes
ceramic bowl	soil	yes
chewing gum	feet of farm animals	yes